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MEMORIAL NOTICE OF JOHN McALLISTER, JR.

Read by CHARLES M. MORRIS, before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania,
January 14, 1878.

MR. PRESIDENT: Since the last meeting, our Society has lost its oldest member in point of years, and one of its most respected. I refer, as you readily conjecture, to the late Mr. John McAllister, who died on the 17th of December last, at the venerable age of 91 years, 5 months, and 18 days. Except the late Horace Binney, who had reached his 96th year, I do not recall any of our members who has attained so great an age; though one of them, the late Samuel Breck, had reached 91 years and 46 days. Mr. McAllister was admitted into this Society on the 26th of March, 1828; and for nearly half a century contributed, statedly, to its support and usefulness. His father (named also John McAllister) was a native of Scotland, who came to this country just before the Revolution. He soon identified himself with our country, and the newspapers of the time inform us, that in the Grand Federal Procession which, on the 9th of July, 1788, celebrated in this city the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, "Mr. John McAllister and his journeymen" represented the manufacturers in the branch of business to which he belonged. Our late fellow-member was born, as appears by an entry, in his own handwriting, made in our "Birthday Book," on the 29th of June, 1786, in our own city, at the northeast corner of Market and Second Streets; and the whole of his long life was passed among our own citizens, and before their eyes. That at the close of it, those citizens generally should lament his departure is a conclusive proof that it was passed with credit and usefulness. No man, by virtue of his place of birth and scene of life, had a better title to be a member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Although from Mr. McAllister's boyhood it was the purpose of his father to devote his son to mercantile pursuits, the

father determined to give him a collegiate education. If his son was to be engaged in commerce or trade, he saw no reason why that son should not be a well-educated, enlightened, and liberally-minded merchant or trader; one whose understanding and conscience, alike, should be instructed and made fit for the work to which his life was to be devoted. He, therefore, sent his son to the University of Pennsylvania, at which seat of science he graduated with credit in the year 1803. He entered, in 1804, into the counting-house of Montgomery & Newbold, merchants of that day, in our city. In 1811, however, a partnership in trade which had existed between his father and a certain Mr. Mathews becoming dissolved, the son took the place of Mr. Mathews, the retiring partner. The firm—which was now known as “John McAllister & Son”—soon became respected through the whole country, and stood at the head of the department—one as much scientific as of trade—which embraces for its subjects, optical and mathematical instruments. Our late member remained in partnership with his father until the death of the latter, A. D. 1830. He himself retired from business five years afterwards; handing it over, A. D. 1835, to his sons, one of whom still continues the business of his father and grandfather, and still maintains their long-established credit of every kind.

At all times of his life, and even as a boy, Mr. McAllister was fond of liberal occupations and studies. Before the seat of Government left this city—while John Adams was President, and even while the august presence of Washington was to be seen in our Senate and Representatives—he had reached an age which made him, in a way, capable of enjoying the great political debates which, in those days, distinguished the Congress of the United States; and he frequently visited both Houses. It was the day when Ellsworth and Cabot and Schuyler and King and Stockton and Morris and Ross and Bingham adorned the Senate, and when Dexter and Sedgwick and Trumbull and Sitgreaves and Boudinot and John Marshall dignified the House. Mr. McAllister often expressed the pleasure with which he listened to the debates, and especially to that with which he listened to the memorable speech

of Mr. Marshall, afterwards Chief Justice, in the case which so much agitated the country, of Jonathan Robins. Of later days—after his retirement from business—as he grew older, and as his mind fed upon recollections, his tastes led him much into the subject of our local antiquities; and his collections of ancient pamphlets, newspapers, maps, and manuscripts being large and well-arranged, his memory clear, and his judgments both moral and intellectual sound, he was continually appealed to for information about men, things, and events of former days in Philadelphia. He was always obliging in imparting the benefits of his recollection and judgment. Undoubtedly, much knowledge that relates to our men and city since the close of the last century has departed with him.

It was a proof of his scientific mind, and of his capacity to apply it practically, that to him we are indebted for the admirable system of numbering houses according to the number of the streets, which first marked our city, and which since has been found so generally convenient, that it has been adopted in the Capital, and is likely to prevail wherever the plan of streets at all allows it.

Up to the close of his long life, Mr. McAllister took a lively interest in all that concerned Philadelphia. In the recent successful efforts to place our University upon a higher base, and to endow it liberally, he took an especial interest. At the time of his death he was the oldest living graduate of the College, and at the meeting of its Alumni, in the year 1876, as you, Sir, who presided on that occasion will remember, he sent a note, which was read amidst the acclamations of all, in which he expressed his deep interest in the welfare of the College where he had graduated seventy-three years before!

In our own Society he took no less an interest. To our Endowment Fund and to our Publication Fund, especially, he looked with interest, as being means by which the Society's stability was certain to be secured and its usefulness enlarged. Our new Magazine of History and Biography commended itself highly to his judgment.

Though Mr. McAllister was not much communicative of his inner thoughts and feelings on the great topics of Religion,

enough is known to assure us that he was a profound believer in the truths of Revelation. He read the Scriptures constantly; the New Testament often in the original Greek. He attended devoutly on religious worship. He did justly; he loved mercy; he walked humbly with his God. And we may not and do not doubt that he has entered into that rest of another world, which awaits the upright man upon this.

MEMORIAL NOTICE OF STEPHEN TAYLOR.

Read by TOWNSEND WARD before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania,
January 14, 1878.

MR. PRESIDENT: On the 8th of December, 1877, a late member of our Society, Stephen Taylor, died at his residence in Frankford Avenue, and was buried on the 12th of that month in the Odd Fellows' Cemetery. He was in his seventy-third year, having been born in Mifflinsburg, Union County, of this State, on the third of April, 1805. He was of a good old Pennsylvania stock, being descended from ancestors contemporaneous with Penn, who settled in the vicinity of Tini-cum and Upland.

In the year 1835 Mr. Taylor was delegated by the Grand Sire of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows to organize a Lodge at Mineral Point, Wisconsin. One had already been instituted at Cincinnati, and thus that in Wisconsin was the second in order of time in the vast region of the northwest.

Continuing to remain in a country that greatly interested him, Mr. Taylor soon became Assistant to Major John P. Sheldon, Register of the United States Land Office at Mineral Point, a position which he held until the year 1841. He prepared and published an early map of the Lead Region of Wisconsin, and in 1842 contributed to Silliman's Journal an interesting illustrated paper on the curious animal-shaped mounds of Wisconsin.

In the year 1843 Mr. Taylor returned to his native State,